

Adhai-Din-Ka-Jhonpra: The Case of Syncretic Architecture and History

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Walking past the crowded alleys, ringing horns and the noises that accompany the flocks of people, the smell of a plethora of street foods and off freshly collected flowers, one feels the sense of anticipation of climbing the steps to Adhai-Din-Ka-Jhonpra. Although dilapidated due a severe lack of maintenance, this edifice has lost none of its initial splendor. This research paper aims to explore and understand the architectural features of this magnificent site, which for the most part of its History has been left unexplored for its scholarly material, and the complex interplay between the three primary forces of Jaina, Hindu and Islamic cultural values. The complex interplay is not only interesting in the way the edifice is finally formulated but also in the myriad of interpretations that it can accommodate, and its place in History as valuable as that of Alhambra in Spain.



1

Adhai-Din-Ka-Jhonpra is a historical monument which was originally established as a Sanskrit college of learning, in 1153 CE by Vignaraja IV, the first Chauhan ruler of India, of the Shakambhari Chauhan dynasty. After the second battle of Tarain in 1192 CE, Muhammad Gauri, ordered the demolition of the site, and a conversion of it into a mosque. This conversion, along with its further renovation under the reign of Iltutmish of Delhi in 1213 CE, has placed this monument in the category of Alhambra in Spain, and other important structures that boast of an inter-faith syncretism in its architecture and being.

Influenced by Jaina Architecture in its origins, and then later converted into a mosque by Hindu masons, under the Afghan architects, name of two who have been recorded, Abu Bakar, the son of Ahmed, and Ahmed, son of Muhammad the Ariz, the syncretic monuments showcase features and motifs of both Jaina Architecture and Hindu Architecture along with Islamic Architecture.



¹(Kapur)

²(Sharda68-74)

³(PanagariyaandPanhariya41-43)

History of Adhai Din Ka Jhonpravis-à-vis VigharajalV (née Visaldeva)

VigharajalV was a Shavite⁴, like his predecessors, as it has been noted in his self-written drama, Harikeli Nakata, parts of which were inscribed in the historical site of Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra, and during an Archeological survey in 1875-76, 6 basalt slabs (tablets) written in Devanagari were excavated. Tablets 3 and 4 contained the parts of the above-mentioned play of Harikeli Nakata, which was written in the honor of God Shiva.⁵

After the corpus of work by Indo-

Aryans collectively known as the Vedas and Puranas were reproduced, the Indian subcontinent saw a slow stratification of society, which resulted in the emergence of Buddhism and Jainism in 5th Century BC.⁶ While Buddhism slowly spread itself towards a major part of Asia, the ideals of Jainism and Hinduism, especially the central tenets of "Anantekavada" (many truths) of the former and the polymorphous character of Hinduism interlaced well with each other in the Indian subcontinent.⁷

However, It is also worth noting that 11th and 12th Century was a tumultuous period for Jainism and Hinduism. Various officials, notably the minister of

Jaina King Bijala⁸, Basava converted several monks to Lingayata, a Shavite sect. Vigharaja was a poet himself, and was a patron to Jain scholars and monks, and frequently participated in Jain rituals. In this particular spirit of generosity, Vigharaja laid the foundation of what was to be a Sanskrit college of learning which would also serve as a temple for Jain monks.⁹

In 660 CE, Jain Acharayas decided to give up a permanent place of residence, and instead chose to journey across India and preach the teachings of Jainism¹⁰. As a place of residence during their tours, Sanskrit college was also used as a Jain temple. This is noted by British explorer and Oriental explorer James Todd, who in his voluminous book, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, noted the distinct style of the site as a Jain temple. He notes, "The architecture is undoubtedly Jain, which is as distinct in character from the Brahmanical as their religion. There is a chasteness and simplicity in this specimen of monotheistic worship, affording a wide contrast to the elaborately sculptured shrines of the Saivas (Shaivas) and other polytheists of India."¹¹

What is interesting to note is that although Sanskrit college follows the architectural style of a Jain temple, the pillars and the inside layout do not and follow a distinct pattern of Hindu temple architecture, which indicates upon an assertion by some scholars that a Jain temple was altered by VigharajalV to be made into a Sanskrit college.¹²

The following illustration by a Henry Sargan, also used by James Todd, eloquently shows the intricate details of the vast pillared hall that rests behind the screen.

⁴(Sharma)

⁵(Sharda68-74)

⁶(Nangia)

⁷(Nangia)

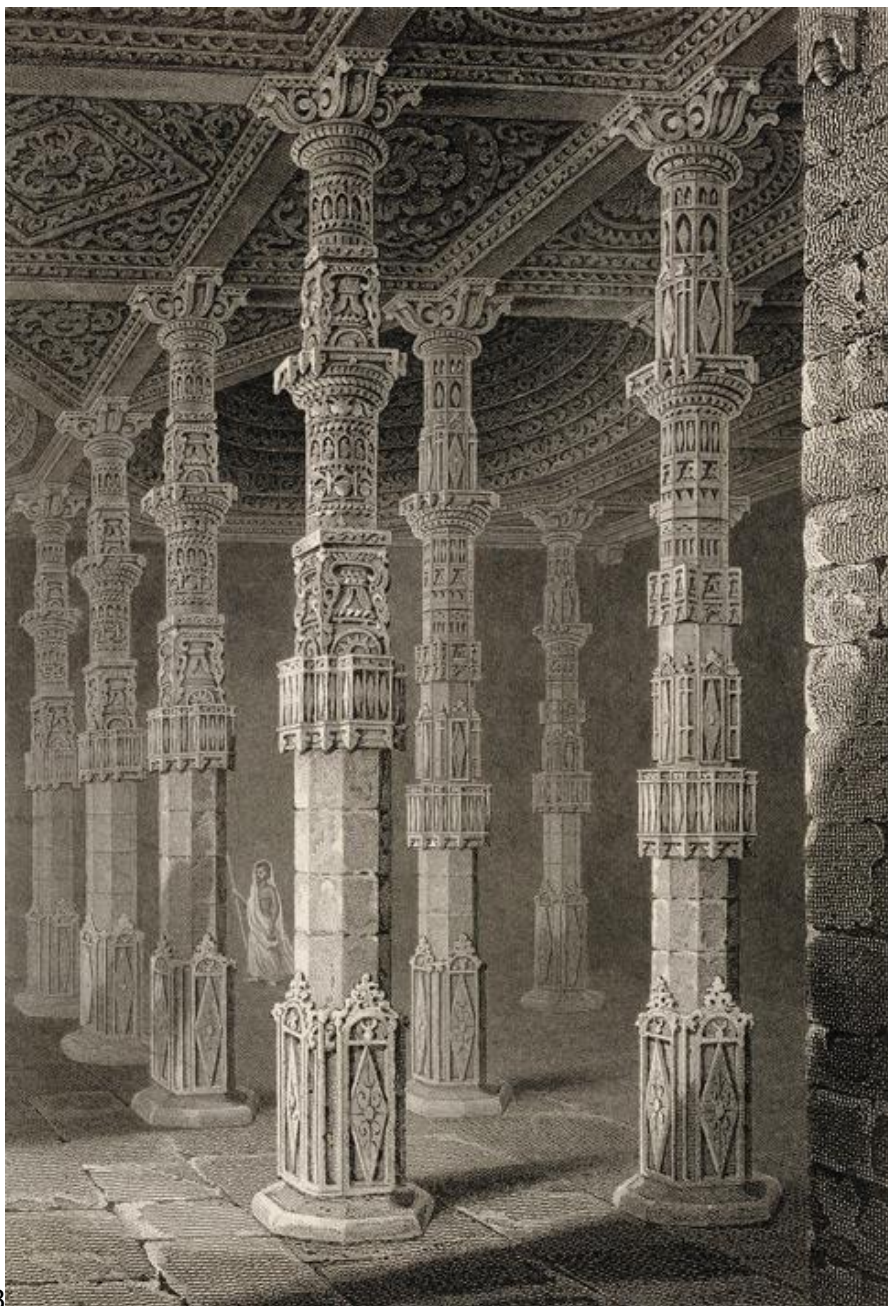
⁸ (Glasepp and

Shrotri)⁹ (Glasepp and

Shrotri)¹⁰(Sharda68-74)

¹¹(Tod778)

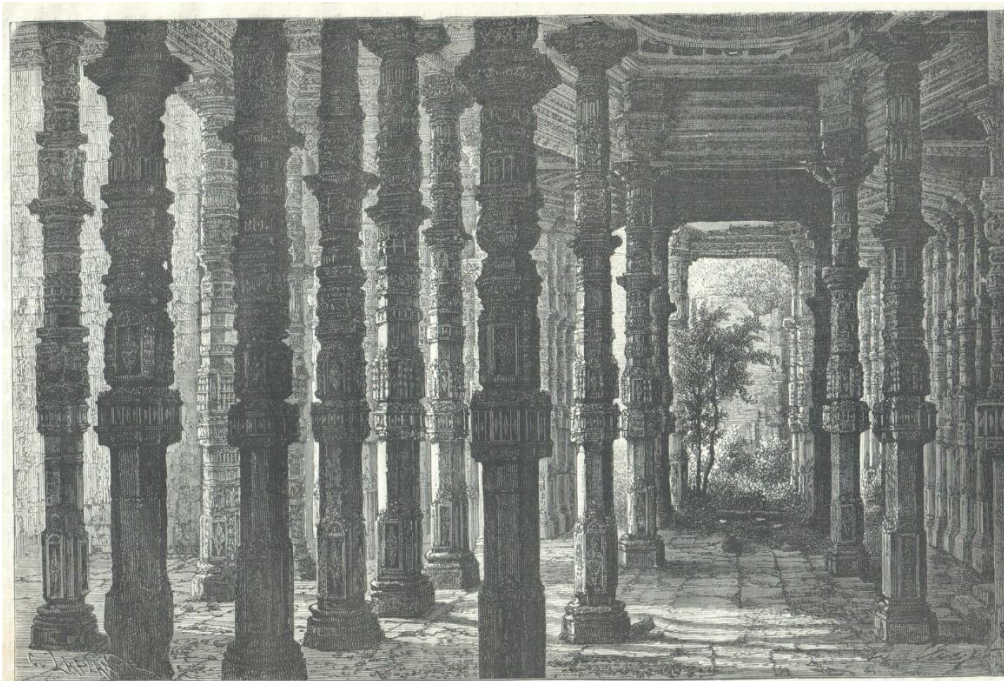
¹²(Danielou)



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Further illustrations show both the inside of the vast-pillared hall, and the screen-wall.

¹³("Adhaidin")



16

History of Adhai Din Ka Jhonpravis-à-vis Muhammad Gori (Gauri)

By the reign of Prithviraj III, great-grandson of Vigharajal V who acceded to the throne in 1177 AD, Muhammad Gori had occupied Panjab and Sind and lusted after the Chauhan territory. After a defeat in the first battle of Tarrain, Gori regrouped in 1192 and defeated Prithviraj III, in the second battle of Tarrain, after which Prithviraj III was brought to Ajmer and executed. His defeat caused the downfall of the Chauhan Empire (Last Hindu Empire), which opened the gates for Muslim rule in India for centuries to follow.¹⁷

As part of their maiden conquest, Islamic marauders quickly sought to leave their mark on the Hindu art and architecture. Sanskrit college was destroyed and converted into a makeshift mosque, leaving much of the original features such as inscribed pillars and the inner layout.

The main additions were the screen of seven arches covering the Sanskrit college from the western front, the imitation of a Mehrab, which denotes the direction of Mecca called Qibla, and the erection of a Mimbar, a pulpit of short steps which is used by an Imam to preach in a mosque. Two minarets were also added to the central arch of the screen, out of which one has been broken in half.¹⁸

In the year 1213 CE, during the time of Sultan Shamsuddin Altamash (Iltutmish), successor of Qutb-ud-Din-Aibak, the screen wall of seven-arches was added, while the Mehrab was added in 1199 CE. This is noted by the inscription on the Mehrab which denotes Jumadall 595 AH as the date the mosque was completed, which converts to 1199 CE in the Gregorian calendar.¹⁹

¹⁴Rousselet 1878
¹⁵Rousselet 1878
¹⁶La Tour Du Monde – 1872
¹⁷(Pangariyha)
¹⁸(Cunningham)
¹⁹(Sharda)



Origin of the Name- Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra

Several theories surround the origins of the name Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra. According to the local legend, Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra (literally translated to 2 ½ days) stems from the conversion of the Sanskrit college to a Mosque (masjid) in the duration of 2 and a half days. Although such a complicated process, without the modern technology of today's day and age, seems highly unlikely. This legend remains what it is, a legend.²⁰

According to James Fergusson in his book, History of Eastern and Indian Architecture, the name denotes the duration it took to clear away the plundered Hindu temples and symbols and to gather materials for the Islamic mosque.²¹

Archeological Society of India has hypothesized that the name comes from the fair that used to be held here for the duration of two and a half days. Some Sufi saints claim that the name signifies the brevity of human life.²²

KDL Khan attaches the origin to a certain anecdote of Muhammed Ghori, who during his daily excursions in the city of Ajmer was enamored with the magnificence of Jaina temples, ordered his slave general, Qutb-ud-Din-Aibak to convert all of them into Mosques for his daily prayers and complete the task in 60 hours (2 and a half days) so that he could offer prayers by the time he comes back. Seeing the impossibility of building an edifice in such a short period of time, the artisans instead built a huge brick screen in front of the biggest Jain shrine of the locality, the Sanskrit college, and hence the building got its name.²³

Har Bilas Sharda dismisses these claims as preposterous. He asserts that as this particular site was the only known masjid (Mosque) in Ajmer for centuries, it would seem illogical to call it Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra. He points out that the site derives its name from the Fakirs (Muslim Ascetic) that gathered in this place during the times of Maharaja to celebrate the Urs anniversary of their religious leader, Panjaba Shah, which lasted for two and a half days and Fakir Residences are called Jhonpras (Huts).²⁴

Architectural Notations and Facts

The entire site of Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra consists of a large square-shaped quadrangle of 262 feet (79.85 meters), which is enveloped on the sides by a cloister of pillars, most of which are ruined now. The cloister of pillars was supported by towers at the corner, in the north, south, east and west.

The interior of the building, or the open court is 200x175 feet (60.96x53.34 meters). The actual mosque is at the western side of the entire building, which is fronted by the screen of seven arches. The entrances are on the eastern and the southern side, with the eastern side being the principal entrance, while the southern side has a projecting porch, although this entrance has been sealed off. The northern side is blocked by a hill rock.

²⁰(Cunningham)

²¹(Fergusson)

²²("ADHAIDINKAJHONPRA | ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA JAIPUR CIRCLE")

²³(KDL Khan)

²⁴(Sharda)

The central arch is 22 feet 2 inches (6.75 meters) wide, the two on each side of it are 13 feet 3 inches (4.03 meters), the next two are 13 feet 4 inches (4.06 meters), and the end ones are 12 feet 8 inches (3.86 meters). The thickness of the screen wall runs for 11½ feet (3.5 Meters)

The roof extends for about 141 feet (42.97 meters), which is about over 60 feet front piers, and then 54 feet at each end is open. The floor has symmetrical granite design, although this was done in the restoration by Archeological survey of India. The original building as found by Colonel Todd and Alexander Cunningham, remained unpaved. This is seen in the illustrations that both these oriental scholars used in their respective books.



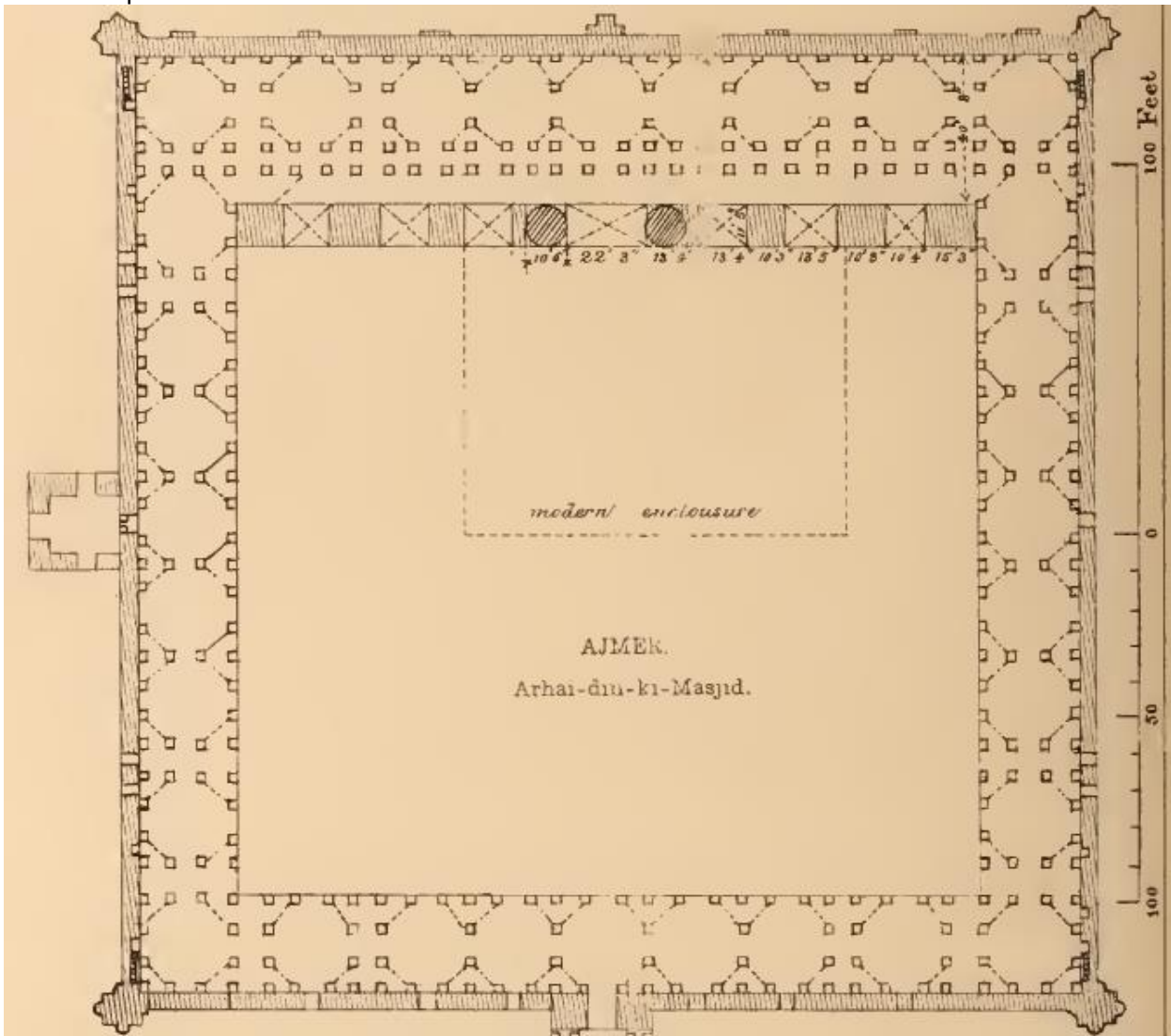
In the center, the screen rises to a height of 56 feet (17.069 meters). The two minarets are about 10 ½ feet (3.2 meters) in diameter, and show circular fluting, which are divided into two parts by horizontal belts of writing, of which the north tower still has some.

When entered from the center arch of the screen, one enters the vast pillared hall that is 141 feet long and 40 feet 8 inches wide, and has five domes. There are four rows of pillars that support this roof and its domes, five if one considers the pilasters on the back wall, and total up to 70 pillars. Originally the western side, would have contained about 9 domes, corresponding to the seven arches and the two cloisters as hypothesized in Alexander Cunningham's restoration plans, with 124 pillars. The eastern side of the cloister would have contained 92 pillars, and each side cloister would have contained 64. This brings the total number of pillars to 344 pillars.²⁵

Alexander Cunningham asserts that this sheer number of pillars requires at least twice the amount of pillar stone from other temples. This number would be no less than 700 pillars which would have to be

²⁵Cunningham

taken from the spoils of at least 20-30 temples.



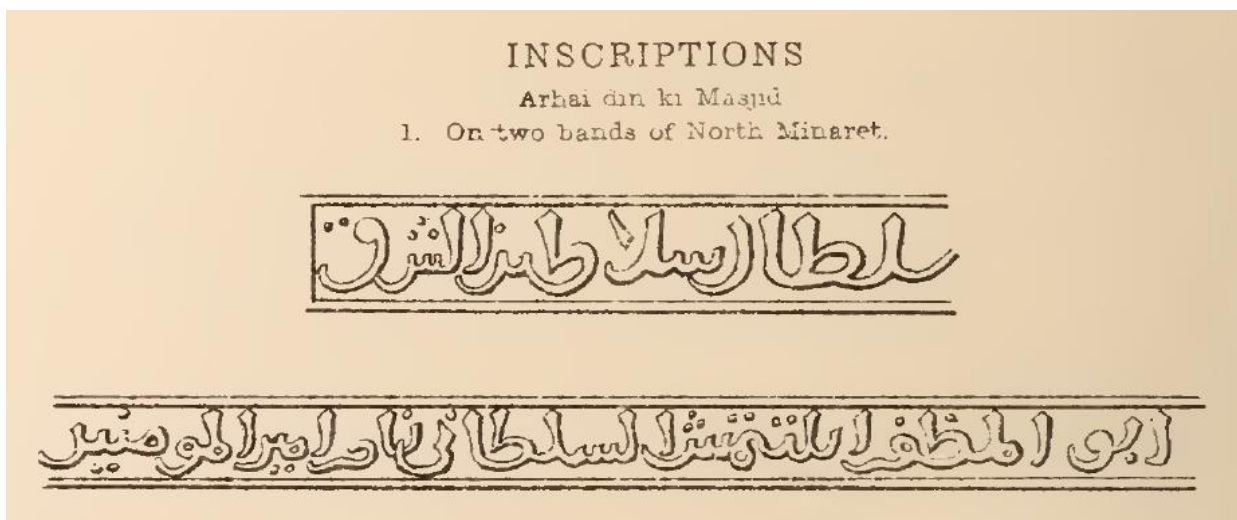


Inscriptions

Most of the available information regarding the architects, the dates of foundation and completion of both the Sanskrit college and the mosque come from inscriptions, on the edifice and its components. What further beautifies the arches are the Kufic and Arabic inscriptions. Each arch is surrounded by three lines of writing with the outer being Kufic and the inner two being Arabic. The lines are interspersed with rich Arabesque ornamentation. Although over the years, the yellow limestone has faded in color, the whole of the arabesque and the writing are still as neat and bold as they were first chiseled, albeit at some places, they have eroded, due to malignant nature of the weather and ill-maintenance of the concerned authorities.

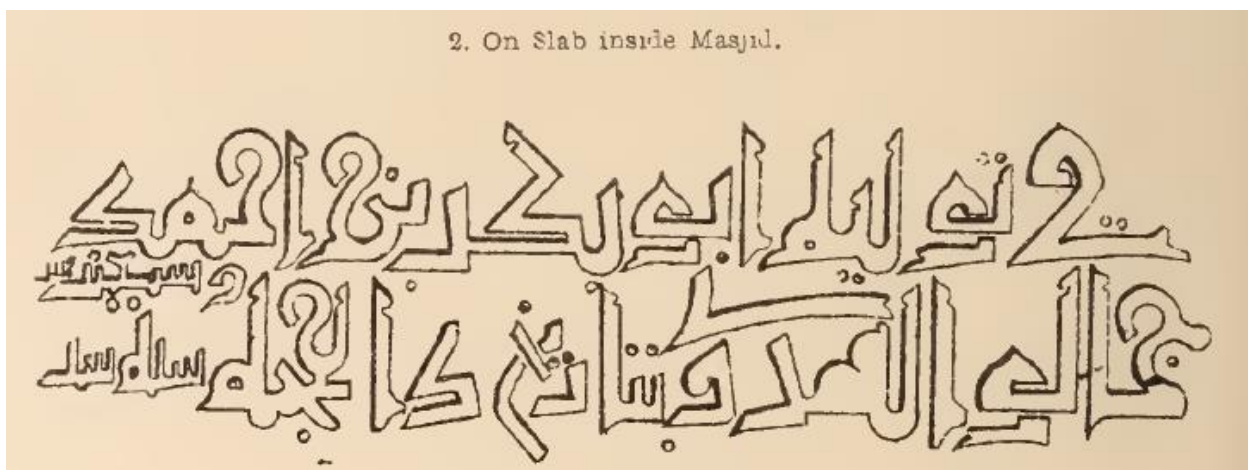
The minarets atop the central arch of the screen have, as discussed before, a horizontal belt of writing. The horizontal belt of writings states, "Sultan-us-Sulatin-us-Shark", and "Abu-ul-Muzafar Ailtamish usSultaneNaserAmir-ulMuminin". This is the declaration of the name of Sultan Iltutmish who was also

known as Amir-ul Muminin²⁶. This inscription confirms that the screen and the mosque was built during the reign of Iltutmish in the period between 1211-1236 CE.



On further inspection of the back-wall of the mosque, under the octagonal roof of the second dome from the center to the north (right), an inscription in two Kufic lines declares that the mosque was erected in the month of Zi-Hijjah A.H. 596 which converts itself to September 1200 CE.

The inscription reads, "(This masjid was built) during the guardianship of Akbar, the son of Ahmed (by the help of God), the Creator, the Everlasting, in the month of Zi-Hijjah, five hundred and ninety six"





Although this inscription is not in a suitable position for being noticed, it might have been a part of some other mosque which was destroyed and its leftover parts used for the building of this particular edifice. If this assertion is incorrect, it alludes to the earlier theory of the origins of the site's name proposed by KDL Khan, that the artisans built a screen wall in the duration of 2 ½ days for Muhammad Gauri to offer his prayers.

²⁶The right-

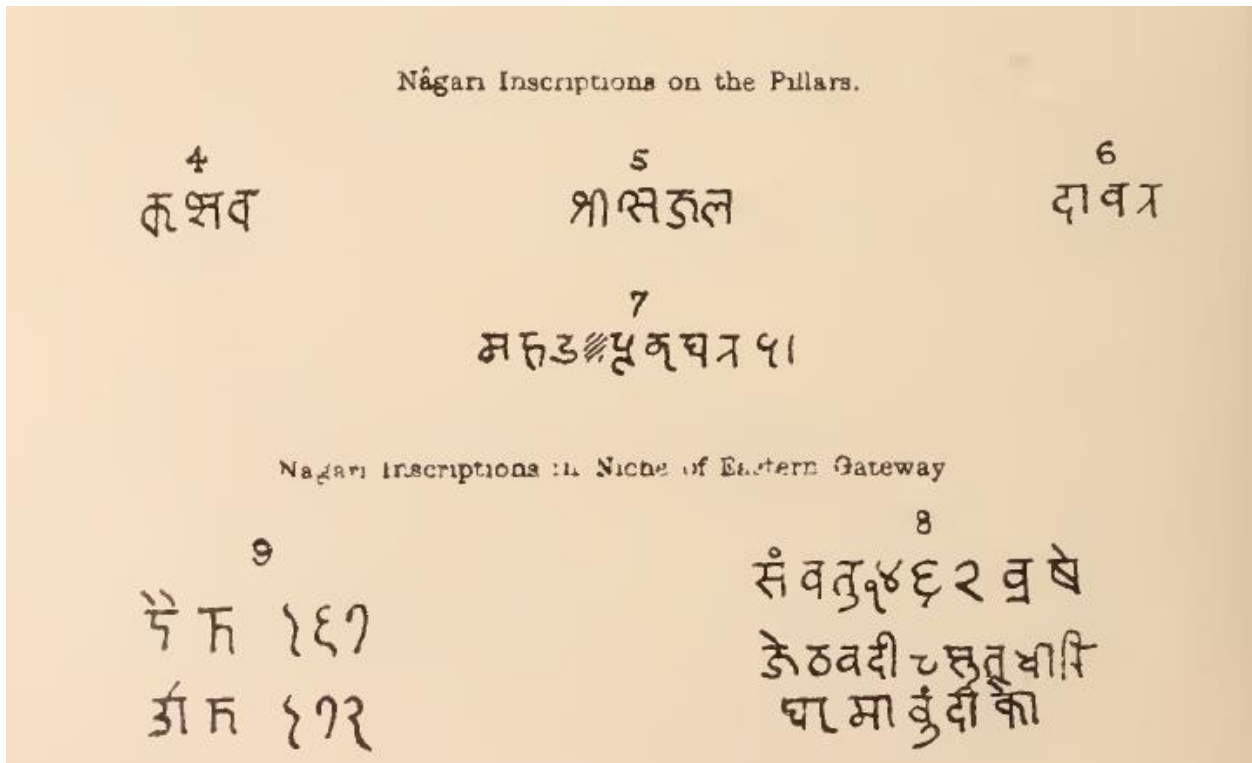
handman of the commander of the Faithful, or a "Naib" (lieutenant) of the Commander of the Faithful, which is the Caliph. - (Salim Zaidpuri)

Alexander Cunningham speculated that this inscription refers to the foundation of a mosque of a smaller stature, till the present mosque was built in its place, and could refer to the origin of the name.²⁷ Alexander Cunningham also searched minutely for inscriptions on the spoilt pillars, and found several short records and single letters, which appear to have been contemporary mason's marks. He mentions the names of "Kesava Sri Sihala" and "Dibara" in 11th or 12th century characters, in eastern cloister pillars' ruins and in the northern cloister pillars', along with a record which reads "Mahada" and "Punagraha 5¼", which implies, although not irrevocably, that the building material was collected from the ruins of the temples erected during 11th and 12th century.²⁸

On the lintels of the small staircase (Minbar) by the back wall of the cloistered hall, there are two small Sanskrit inscriptions that, due to their seemingly hidden position, had hitherto escaped observation and turned into ruins, destruction at the hands of the Islamic conquerors. While one of them is in a good position and

states, "श्रीविग्रहराजदेविकाररतमायतनममदं" which translates to, "This building was constructed by the illustrious King Vigharaj", the other one states, "made by the illustrious King Vigharaj".²⁹

On the marble pillar of the northern balcony at the entrance gate lies another inscription in Nagri characters in Hindi language which notes the visit of the master mason of Boondi by the name of Dharmain 1405 AD, along with the measurements of the Jhonpra as "Hath 172, Hath 167" are also noted that General Cunningham states corroborate with his own measurements, (172:167::272.6: 264.5)³⁰





²⁷(Cunningham)

²⁸(Cunningham)

²⁹(Sharda)

³⁰(Cunningham)

Arabic and Kufic inscriptions that run along the arches and the mihrab, along with beautifying the entire edifice, provide the earliest signs of the Islamic conquest and propaganda over Hindu lands, which along with other architectural features will be discussed later.

The earliest inscription in Arabic features on the mihrab, which begins with a verse from the Koran and ends with the date of construction - But the only shall visit the temples of God who believes in God and the last day, and is constant at prayer, and pays the legal alms, and fears God alone. These perhaps may become of the number of those who are rightly directed. Do ye reckon the giving of drink to the pilgrims and the visiting the holy temples to be actions as meritorious as those performed by him who believeth in God and the last day, and fighteth for the religion of God? They shall not be held equal with God; for God directeth not the unrighteous people. Erected on the 21st Jamadi-un-Akhir H. 595 (1199 CE).³¹

Around the cusped arch, also states a traditional hadith -

The prophet has said that a fast should be made for prayers before they are remitted and for toba (repentance) before death comes.³²

As discussed before, out of the three lines of inscriptions on the central arch, the inner two are Arabic while the outer one is Kufic and while the inner two Arabic lines repeat the verses on the mihrab, the Kufic lines provide the date of origins of the screen - This building was ordered to be built by the King of the World, the just, the magnificent; the King the great, superior Land of the heads of the people, chief of the King of Arabia and Persia; he is the shadow of God in this world, the sun of the faith and the world. The defender (one who attends to the complaints of Islam and Muhammadans; the crown of the nobles and the kings, the extirpator of the unbelievers and their religious ever ready to clear off the darkness of unbelief and the idolaters, the supporter of Islam, the mighty Government and the crown of the bright religion, master of land and water, the King of the Eastern Continent; Heaven helps him; victorious over his enemies; his titles Abdul Muzaffar Altamash Sultan, the right hand of the Caliph of God, the ally of the chief of Muhammadans, he is sublime in everything, and every moment a new proof of his greatness is forthcoming. This was written on the 20th of Rabi-ul-Akhir... - This stone is no longer there, presumably lost during later-years renovation.³³

Sanskrit College in light of the Jain Architecture

Colonel Todd in his book, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, heralded the Sanskrit College as a Jain temple and analyzed the edifice in its structure, and its components like the octagonal ceilings and heavily decorated and ornamented pillars. He later footnoted his essays, stating "It is certain that they are not Jain pillars, as I found many four-armed figures sculpted on them, besides a single figure of the skeleton goddess, Kali." He further added that the Islamic conquerors had merely added the noble screen wall of seven-arches which fronts the mosque. Alexander Cunningham, in his Archeological Survey Reports 1862, speculates that the mosque was built from the ruins of Hindu temples, and was probably a Hindu temple.³⁴

As mentioned before, analysis of the original structure of the site shows evidence of it as a Jain temple, which was later altered into a Sanskrit college.

³¹(Sharda)

³²(Sharda)

³³(Sharda)

³⁴(Todd)



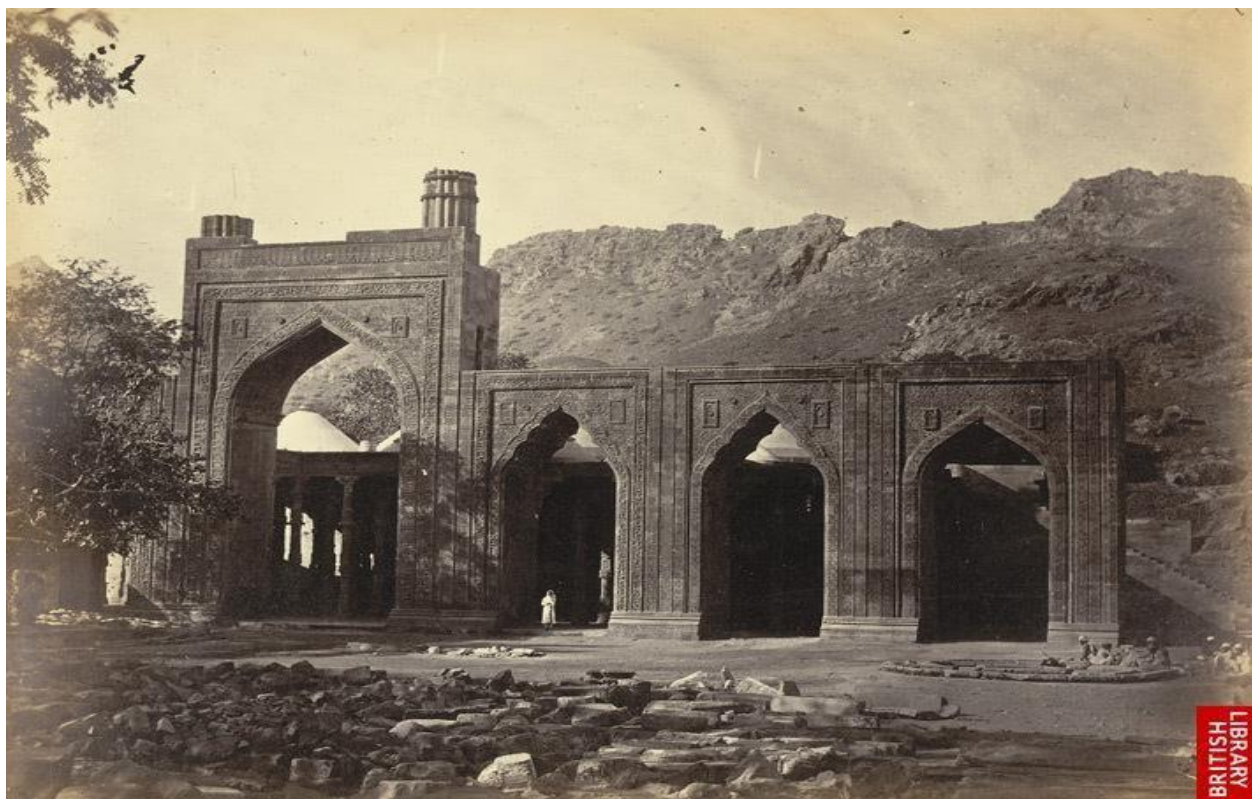
Jaina architecture is an off-shoot to Hindu and Buddhist architecture. In the initial stages, Jaina temples were made adjoining the Buddhist temples following the Buddhist rock-cut style, where they were mainly carved out of rocks and the use of bricks was absent or negligible.³⁵ As Jainism spread, Jaina architectural style evolved from Hindu architecture, where instead of a stand-alone temple, which is the norm of Hindu temple architecture, Jains made temples-cities on hill tops based on the concept of mountains-of-immortality.³⁶

Apart from the theological viewpoint that hilltops are holy, they make impregnable sites that ward off potential marauders. Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra's layout follows Jaina architectural style as it is situated near a hill-rock along. Jaina temples also employ numerous pillars, with a well-designed structure that forms squares-concept of temples with temples divided into sanctums - which also protect the temples from plunderers.³⁷ Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra's original site also follows the same arrangement of pillars. Jaina architectural style also employs the use of conic domes to their octagonal ceilings - a style distinct from its Hindu counterpart to produce a skyline with multiple domes reaching across to the sky. Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra, as seen in illustrations and old photos, had conical domes till the renovations by Architectural Survey of India in 1875-76 that changed the conical domes to hemispherical ones. The reason was noted by James Fergusson - The outer form of these early domes, in conformity with their interiors, being conical, was regarded as ugly, and the Archeological Survey replaced them a few years ago by "better shaped hemispherical ones."

³⁵(Nangia)

³⁶(Glasenapp and Shrotri)

³⁷(Henri Stierlin)



The pillars however do not follow a jaina structure as various Hindu motifs such as Lotus, Guldasta, Chakra, and dotted-diamond motifs, and Kalash motifs can also be seen. Artisans who were employed were often non-denominational in their religious orientation and adapted their techniques to the culture of their reigning kingdom. Alterations from a Jaina temple-city to a Hindu Sankrit college, could have been implemented through the alteration to its inner components such as design of the pillars, rather than the entire edifice.

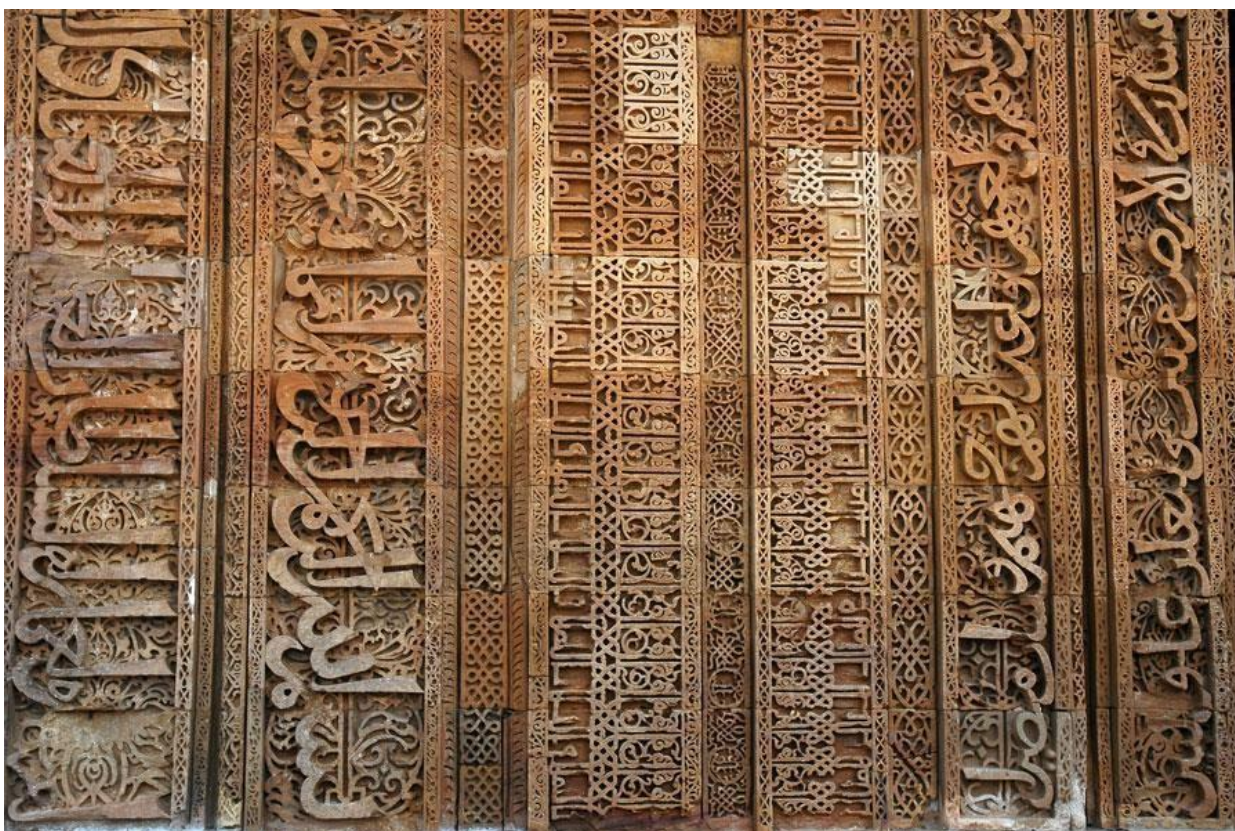


Original structure layout of a Jaina temple also hints towards its conversion into a mosque. The astylar temples of the Hindus served as nothing but quarries for Muslims - distinct from Jain temples whose light columnar styles not only supplied suitable material but also more suitable for their purpose. James Fergusson notes the architectural ease of converting a Jain temple into a mosque - By removing the principal cell and its porch from the centre of the court, and building up the entrances that surround it, a courtyard was at once obtained, surrounded by a double colonnade, which always the typical form of a mosque. Still one essential feature was wanting, a more important side towards Mecca; this they easily obtained by removing the smaller pillars from that side, and erecting in their place that large pillar of the porch, with their dome in the center; and, if there were two smaller domes, by placing them at each end. Thus, without a single new column or carved stone being required, they obtained a mosque which

for convenience and beauty, was unsurpassed by anything they afterwards erected from their own original design.

Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra in light of Islamic Architecture

It is not wrong to assume that Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra was one of the early specimen for Indo-Islamic architecture. Where Hindu Architecture relies on decorative embellishing, Islamic architecture relies on simplicity. Hindu architectural style uses sculptures to detail their ceilings and pillars, while Islamic architectural style uses surface decoration in the form of arabesque, calligraphy, stone carving and floral patterns to beautify their edifices, since any form of representation of their prophets is strictly prohibited. The Kalash motif was used on Dome finials of mosque, and the lotus motif was then used under its finial. One of the distinct differences between Hindu and Islamic architectural style are the open courts used for praying and worship. While the Hindu shrine is dark and closed, narrow in space, the Islamic architectural style allows for a more spacious courtyard meant for Namaaz and other Islamic practices.





Withtheadvent of Islam, lltutmishorderedthebuildingof ascreeninfrontof thewall, whichusesarabesque, andfloralpatternsinstonecarving, alongwithcalligraphywithversesfromKoran .40

Inside the pillared-hall, a Mihrab niche was installed to point towards the direction of Mecca, and a mimbarwasinstalledinthenortherncourtyard.LatermosquehaveanessentialfeatureofaMinaretwhichisused

³⁸(Fergusson)

³⁹(FromtheAlbumofVarunShivKapur)

⁴⁰(Fergusson)

toannouncethecalltoprayer(Azan).AdhaiDinKaJhonpradoesnothavethisfeaturebutinsteadiscompensated in the form of two towers atop the central arch. Although the craftsmanship of Minarets isone of an unpracticed hand working in an unfamiliar environment. Minarets, in the later years till now, arealwayspreparedforfromthefoundationoftheestablishment, andtheirlinescarriedtothegroundinsteadof an arch. This iconoclasm could rise from the fact that Muslim rulers employed the existing HinduarchitectsandmasonswhowereunfamiliarwithIslamicfeatures.4142

TherectangularshapeofdoorsandentranceswerealsoreplacedwiththemoreIslamicfeatureofcuspedarches.H arBilasShardaassertsthatthearchesofthescreenarenotonlymadebyHindumasonsbutarealso of Hindu origin. The cusped arches of the screen closely resonate with the “torana” (nuptial/triumphalarch)archesofHinduarchitecture.43ColonelToddseemstothinkthatearlyMussalmanarchi tectslernedtomakearchesfromtheHindus.4445



ThepillarsandceilingsofthepillaredhallarealsomodifiedtohaveanIslamicorratheranon-Hinducharacter. The pillars and the ceilings show a combination of original plundered Hindu pillars and pillarsthatwerelatermadeunderthesupervisionofMuslimofficials.Theneworderofpillarsshowdeviation



- ⁴¹(Cunningham)
- ⁴²(Fergusson)
- ⁴³(MichaelW.Meister)
- ⁴⁴(Todd)
- ⁴⁵(Sharda)

from pure Hindu architectural styles, and lend a toned-down sobriety towards the more simplistic nature of Islamic architecture. In the pillars, the niches meant for deities or sub-deities, the motif of tall-foliated diamonds is applied. The new order pillars, raise the interior of the Hindu temple, so as to provide more space, a feature more attuned to Islamic practices.⁴⁶

The ceilings also show a combination of old and new work, where the central lotus, seems to be a substitute for a more pronounced Hindu concept of a pendant. The ceiling also has a less decorative character than the ornate of Hindu temples, as noticed in various other temples of that period, and instead of intricate designs follows a simplistic pattern. Michael W. Meister argues that some motifs such as tall diamond motif, rosettes, sunbursts and lozenges and bands of diamond niches between the two cusped courses have been used to compensate for the lack of traditional Hindu architectural style of a figure of a god standing in a "pedimented" niche. The principal of highlighting the praying area in mosque was done by the use of domes in the Islamic world, and the central dome in this particular site does the same.

The cinquefoil arch of the Mihrab traces itself back to 12th century Afghanistan, and its white color and the use of marble sets the purely Islamic feature of the mosque distinctly apart from its surroundings. Its

- ⁴⁶(MichaelW.Meister)
- Arabic inscriptions, declare the need and importance of homage and prayer in Islam.⁴⁷⁴⁸





It is also imperative to mention the use and effect of Screen. Apart from its picturesque character that adds beauty to the vast pillared hall, it does not serve any liturgical purposes apart from giving the entire site a more pronounced Islamic character. One cannot help but think that the screen might even serve as a literal screen, to hide the impure nature of its inner mosque, and to block out any Jaina feature to be shown, by going one arch extra than the pillared hall.⁴⁹ The entire screen, also has Arabic and Kufic inscriptions running through them, and are interspersed with an arabesque, an Islamic architectural feature, and serve to intensify the visual appeal of the screen and the Islamic conquest on Hindulands.

Historiography-Debate and Implications of Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra

Scholars over the century have debated what Indo-Islamic architecture and the features of its examples simply. Whether they are a witness to a smooth or a rough transition, or a witness to a time of uncertainty and political upheaval, remains a topic of constant evaluation and debate. Most of the disquiet around Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra and mosque that were established in that time frame are these; Can Islamic mosque be Indian? Are Islamic Mosque part of the Indian culture and heritage?

Fritz Lehmann argues that the debate over the character of the early Indo-Islamic mosques must be taken away from being seen as testimony to religious conflict towards a study of the Sultanate period and its values. This viewpoint is reiterated by Mohammad Mujeeb who asserts that it would be fairer to analyze the real differences between architectural buildings, not on grounds of religious differences, but on grounds of the degree to which the standards and aesthetic principles of sculpture and architecture have been applied. As discussed before, Hindu masons did not see themselves as Hindu masons, and did not pledge their artistic allegiance to their Hindu rulers but as technicians, who took wages from whichever ruler who allowed them to express their skills. Sunil Kumar asserts that the structures provide an insight, a rather raw visual evidence, to the tumultuous period of the complex, fragmented political and religious world of Indian Middle Ages.⁵⁰ He identifies that the historiography is divided between the Secular version - Islamic inspiration was depended upon indigenous craftsmanship for its ultimate realization - and a religious version, which states that the entire edifices, and their components espouse the essential Islamic conquest on Hindulands.

Robert Hillbrand, a proponent of the latter Historiography, argues that the certain modifications, like the use of domes, arabesque, Mihrab, and the specification and aspects of the principal Mussalla, are all to specify the Islamic-ness of the edifice and in turn highlight the Islamic conquest.

Michael W. Meister declares Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra as a short-lived and an unproductive phenomenon, but with a raw mixing of cultures and art. Such a synthesis occurs when a culturally weak ruling power, clashes with a relatively stronger one, and is forced to borrow their elements to lend substance to the witnesses of their conquest. The buildings are plundered and destroyed and their material and structural styles used to build institutions of the conquerors' culture (in this case, religion). As ties between the Islamic rule in India and their middle-eastern counterpart increased, the Islamic character of the later buildings became more pronounced.

Conclusion

All in all, Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra, with its inscriptions, modified pillars, ceilings, screen, and its plundered ruins, represents the earliest specimen of Indo-Islamic architecture, one which was both a product of its tumultuous times, and a leading figure hailing the arrival of Islam and its rule into the Hindulands. It's value

⁴⁹(Hillenbrand)

⁵⁰(Kumar)

in the scholarship of Indian-Islamic world is genuinely invaluable, and at the same time, due to the administration of the site, has been ignored. The site now bears scratched names of random citizenry who feel that a Historical monument must be witness to their undying love of some other random citizenry. It's saddening to see, the gradual and inevitable demise of a site as intriguing as Adhai Din



KaJhonpra, because it possibly serves as a visual reminder that History will absorb all the conflicting forces of time and merge into something beautiful; the syncretic synthesis of Islam and Hinduism.

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